

# Health Canada warns against Meridia

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Health Canada issued a warning for doctors not to prescribe the weight loss drug Meridia to people who may be at risk of serious heart-related side effects.

Since January 2001, Health Canada has received 65 reports of irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, heart attack and other heart-related reactions linked to Meridia, the Montreal Gazette reported Monday.

The warning label on the product says it should not be prescribed to those with a history of coronary artery disease or to anyone on antidepressants.

The new data "do not prove (Meridia) is harmful," said Dr. Raj Padwal, professor of general internal medicine at the University of Alberta.

He added that the actual number of patients reporting side effects is "very small" and that obese individuals are already at increased risk of cardiovascular "events" because of their weight.

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